

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /003 R

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DRAFTED BY: ARA: CBJACOBINI

APPROVED BY: ARA: CBJACOBINI

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O 201626Z SEP 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 232678

FOR SHLAUDEMAN FROM LUERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT MONTEVIDEO 3484 ACTION SECSTATE DIA INFO
BRASILIA BUENOS AIRES JOHANNESBURG PANAMA SANTIAGO; HQ,
USSOUTHCOM, SCJ2; USCOMSOLANT 17 SEP 76

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3484

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, AR, UY

SUBJECT: SPECULATION OVER A "SOUTH ATLANTIC TRATY ORGANIZATION"

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5999 (DTG 151335Z SEP 76) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. SPECULATION CONCERNING CREATION OF A SOUTH ATLANTIC
TREATY ORGANIZATION BEGAN IN URUGUAY LAST MAY WHEN THE PRESS
STATED THAT U.S. ADMIRALS ELLIS AND SAGERHOLM (ON A UNITAS
PLANNING TRIP) WERE MEETING WITH ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN
ADMIRALS IN ARGENTINA. PRESS SPECULATION APPEARED ANEW ON
SEPTEMBER 17 WHEN THE NATION'S LARGEST CIRCULATION DAILY,
EL PAIS, FRONT-PAGED AN EFE STORY FROM BUENOS AIRES ABOUT THE
"IMMINENT" CREATION OF A NAVAL ALLIANCE WHICH WILL EMBRACE
A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE U.S. URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS
HAVE NEVER RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH US BUT A NUMBER OF POLITI-
CIANS HAVE - AND THEY BELIEVE A REGIONAL ACCORD IS BEING ARRANGED.

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END SUMMARY.

2. EL PAIS OF SEPTEMBER 17, FRONT-PAGED AN EFE REPORT FROM BUENOS AIRES. ARTICLE'S BANNER HEADLINE READS "THEY WOULD CREATE A SOUTH ATLANTIC ORGANIZATION." IN ESSENCE, EFE SAID THAT SOURCES "IN A POSITION TO KNOW" IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE NAVY COMMAND HAD DESCRIBED THE CREATION OF A SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AS IMMINENT. THE ORGANIZATION WOULD COME IN REACTION TO THE COMMUNIST ADVANCE IN THE AREA AND WOULD INCLUDE A NUMBER OF NAVIES, INCLUDING THE U.S. UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION WAS BELIEVED TO BE LIKELY BECAUSE OF COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO VONO SHEAR AT THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTH INTER-AMERICAN NAVAL CONFERENCE IN RIO IN AUGUST.

3. A SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONJECTURE IN URUGUAY SINCE MAY WHEN U.S. ADMIRALS ELLIS AND SAGERHOLM LEFT MONTEVIDEO FOR BUENOS AIRES ON UNITAS PLANNING CONFERENCE. PRESS HERE CARRIED REPORTS THAT BRAZILIAN CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS WAS IN BUENOS AIRES AT THE SAME TIME AND THAT ARGENTINE, BRAZILIAN AND U.S. ADMIRALS WERE MEETING TO FORM A REGIONAL ALLIANCE BECAUSE OF THE THREAT POSED TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC BY THE SOVIET/CUBAN INCURSION INTO THE AREA. SINCE THEN A NUMBER OF URUGUAYAN POLITICIANS HAVE ASKED US ABOUT SUCH AN ALLIANCE AND, IN FACE OF OUR PROTESTATIONS OF IGNORANCE, MADE CLEAR THEIR BELIEF A NEW REGIONAL ACCORD WAS, INDEED, UNDERWAY. ON THE OTHER HAND, NO URUGUAYAN OFFICIAL, CIVILIAN OR MILITARY, HAS MENTIONED THE SUBJECT TO ANYONE IN THE MISSION.

4. THIS EMBASSY, BY THE WAY, HAS RECEIVED NOTHING REGARDING RESOLUTION OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF REPORT ON THE INTER-AMERICAN NAVAL CONFERENCE IN RIO. IF SUCH INFO IS AVAILABLE, IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO US. HAAHR UNQUOTE. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, NAVAL FORCES, PRESS COMMENTS, COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE232678
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA: CBJACOBINI
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760355-0153
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760940/aaaabimd.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BUENOS AIRES 5999
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPECULATION OVER A "SOUTH ATLANTIC TRATY ORGANIZATION"
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, AR, UY
To: SAN JOSE SAN SALVADOR
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006